ALERT

Attention: Medicaid Physicians, Pharmacies, FQHC, RHC, Optometrists, and Nursing Homes

In accordance with Alabama Act No. 2003-297, Alabama Medicaid is in the process of developing and implementing a mandatory Preferred Drug List (PDL). The new PDL will be implemented in phases over the next several months.

The Preferred Drug List will be comprised of all covered generic and over-the-counter products. In addition, certain brand name products may be preferred agents. Non-preferred agents for the classes reviewed will require prior authorization. Prescriptions written for brand-preferred drugs, generic, and over-the-counter drugs will not require prior authorization. HIV/AIDS drugs and Anti-Psychotic drugs are excluded from the PDL process and will be available without prior authorization.

Medicaid will utilize the Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee to develop a PDL based on clinical efficacy, safety and patient care factors. The P&T Committee is comprised of at least five practicing physicians nominated by the Medical Association of State of Alabama and three clinical pharmacists nominated by the Alabama Pharmacy Association. Members of the P&T Committee represent various fields of specialty including psychiatry, internal medicine, pediatrics, long-term care and independent pharmacy.

The PDL will be implemented in phases that will consist of three to four groups of drug classes. The first group includes Anti-Depressants, Platelet Aggregation Inhibitors and Narcotic Analgesics. Each phase will include a period of "soft" edits prior to implementation of a "hard" PA edit. During the "soft" edit phase, a message will be sent to the pharmacist if a claim is entered for a non-preferred brand product. The message will notify the pharmacist that within the next thirty days, a prior authorization will be required for the non-preferred prescribed product. It will also provide the pharmacist with a list of the preferred alternatives. During this initial phase, the pharmacist will be able to override this alert at the pharmacy level and will not be required to obtain an override from Health Information Designs, Inc (HID). After the initial thirty-day period, prior authorization will be required.

The "soft" PDL edit will be implemented for the first group of drugs effective September 3, 2003. Beginning October 1, 2003, prior authorization from HID will be required for the non-preferred brands of these classes.

The second group of drugs to be implemented will include Anxiolytics, Hypnotics/Sedatives, Skeletal Muscle Relaxants and Anti-Hypertensives. This group will be implemented as "soft" edits October 1, 2003 and converted to "hard" edits requiring prior authorization effective November 3, 2003.

This process will continue in phases throughout the implementation of the PDL. Any questions concerning the PDL or this notice should be directed to the Medicaid Pharmacy Program at (334) 242-5050.

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P.O. Box 241685
Montgomery AL 36124-1685